

Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant

Indiana

Stepping On: Stopping Falls Before They Happen

“We know falls are not just a normal part of aging, they are preventable, like all injuries. Due to Stepping On, we are now confident that we have a program that is proven to reduce older adult falls, and we are eager to disperse this program for our fellow Hoosiers.”

Preston Harness, Injury Prevention Program Coordinator
Indiana State Department of Health

Public Health Problem (Issue)

Falls are a major health problem among older adults age 65 and older. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), every 11 seconds an older adult is treated in the emergency department for a fall, and every 20 minutes an older adult dies from a fall. Falls are one of the leading causes of fatal injury and most common cause of traumatic brain injury (TBI) in this aging population.

Falls result in more than 2.8 million injuries in emergency departments and trauma systems annually. In 2013, the societal burden of older adult falls reached \$34 billion; in addition, this is expected to rise to \$67.7 billion by 2020. There are several risk factors related to falls, including: lower body weakness; Vitamin D deficiency; difficulties with walking and balance; vision problems; foot pain; and environmental factors (such as broken or uneven steps).

Not only do falls impact older adults physically, but it also can take a strong toll on their quality of life. Fear of falling can limit social engagements and activities in older adults, leading to further physical decline, reduced mobility, and social isolation, which increases the risk of falling.

The U.S. Census Bureau currently projects the baby-boom population will total 61.3 million in 2029, when the youngest boomers reach age 65. The aging of the baby boomers creates a dramatic shift in the age composition of the U.S. population, and will only increase the number of falls and fall related injuries in the U.S.

Taking Action (Intervention)

The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH), Division of Injury and Trauma Prevention, has identified older adult falls as one of the core injury areas to address throughout Indiana. One of the programs that was implemented from the Block Grant was dispersing evidence-based falls prevention programs through Indiana.

The ISDH has also identified Stepping On, an evidence-based program proven to reduce falls and build confidence in older adults, as a program that we will utilize in 2018. Although it has taken time to plan, propose, and initiate the program, the block grant funding has allowed for the Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (WIHA) to train 6 organizations on Stepping On in Indiana. Block grant funding has allowed for ISDH to partner with the University of Indianapolis, Center for Aging and Community. This evidence-based program will be dispersed throughout Indiana once Injury & Trauma Prevention\University of Indianapolis staff are trained as master trainers. Stepping On targets people who are at risk of falling, have a fear of falling, or have fallen one or more times, and workshops are facilitated by trained Leaders and provide a safe and positive learning experience. This train-the-trainer program will be utilized in order to disperse more evidence-based programs in the underserved and rural parts of Indiana, which will train healthcare professionals to educate older adults about how to prevent falls from happening.

Impact

Stepping On resulted in a 50% reduction in falls in Wisconsin in the pilot program, and effectiveness is shown to be strong; therefore, we are confident that we will have similar numbers in Indiana. So far, data is limited because each of the 6 participants just finished teaching their first workshop together (in pairs).

There is a 30 and 90 day follow-up associated with the classes, and data will be collected there. We will also keep track of the number of workshop leaders in Indiana. The block grant funding has helped increase the percentage of Stepping On leaders in the state of Indiana by 200%.

Footnotes

Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (WIHA) <https://wihealthyaging.org/stepping-on>

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Healthy People Objective

Unintentional Injury Deaths

PHHS Block Grant Funding

100% - Total source of funding

PHHS Block Grant Coordinator

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For more information on the

PHHS Block Grant, go to

www.cdc.gov/phhsblockgrant

For more information on

Healthy People, go to www.healthypeople.gov

PHHS Block Grant Supports

Indiana Healthy People Priorities

The PHHS Block Grant provides flexible funding that states can use to prevent and control chronic diseases, respond quickly to outbreaks of infections and waterborne diseases, and address their specific public health needs. States can align their programs with health objectives from [Healthy People](http://www.healthypeople.gov).

Indiana uses its funds to address 14 health objective priorities, including

- Cardiovascular Health.
- Community Water Fluoridation.
- Accredited Public Health Agencies.
- Public Health Agency Quality Improvement Program.
- Health Improvement Plans.

For a complete list of funded health objectives, go to

<http://www.cdc.gov/phhsblockgrant/stateHPprior.htm>.